

Meeting Minutes:

Computer Science Information Technology & Information Systems (ITIS) Advisory Retreat 2026

Meeting Overview

- Professor David Nimri led the introductions, requesting specific feedback from employers on technical needs and missing skills so the department can properly adjust its curriculum.

Attendees

Chaffey College

- **David Nimri** – Professor, Department Coordinator
- **Haz Novoa** – Professor
- **Joseph Lee** – Professor
- **Dionne Henderson** – Professor
- **Andrew Salazar** – Professor
- **Gabriel Sirlopu** – Professor
- **Dr. Tracy Kocher** – Professor
- **Sharon Solis** – Professor
- **Gabriel Goltz** – Instructional Aid

Industry Representatives

- **Acorn Technology Services:** Rachel Hemond – IT Manager
- **Cal Poly Pomona:** Christopher Laasch – Information Security Director

- **Calstate:** Felix Zuniga – Campus Engagement Partner
- **Education Design Lab:** Asha Gordon – Senior Education Designer | Joseph Davis – Senior Designer
- **General Atomics:** Erik Perez – Airport Operations Manager | James Callahan – Project Manager | Luis Mota – Manager | Timothy Morgan – Manager
- **Ontario Montclair School District:** Ivan Jacobo – Network Administrator
- **Riverside County:** Darryl Polk – CTO
- **San Bernardino County:** Frank Sullivan – Sys Admin
- **San Bernardino County Public Health:** Ryan Burgess – IT Deputy Chief | Raul Fierros – Business Applications Manager | Clarissa Alvarez – Manager | John Reyes – Security Manager
- **Southern California Edison:** Cesar Chavez – Southern California Edison Representative
- **Summit Interconnect:** Tuan Nguyen – IT Manager
- **Tech Docs:** Najma Rahaman – Owner
- **Vertical IT:** Kody Bakos – CEO | Josiah Castellano – IT Manager
- *Student representatives from the Cyber Security, Game Dev, AI, and MakerSpace clubs were also present to share their progress.*

Department Data and Achievements

- The department serves a predominantly Hispanic population, mostly aged 20 to 24, and includes a strong dual-enrollment program for high school students.
- The program's success and retention rates sit comfortably above the college average at roughly 70-75%.
- The department has received notable recognition, ranking #3 in California for Cybersecurity by Programs.com and #8 nationally for Computer Science by Tech Guide.
- The Cyber Skyline NCL team ranked 34th nationally, beating out several major universities.
- The department is officially launching the first applied Artificial Intelligence degree in the region, partnering directly with NVIDIA's guidance to utilize CUDA architecture.

Curriculum Updates (ITIS Reboot)

- The department name is officially changing from CIS to ITIS (Information Technology

Information Systems) to streamline pathways and align with state C-ID numbering.

- All incoming students will start with a core pathway certificate covering foundational IT courses before branching into a specialization.
- The Network Specialist pathway is pushing students toward Cisco certifications (CCNA) rather than CompTIA, as it provides more hands-on administrative skills.
- The Programmer Certificate will ensure students are introduced to both compiled (C++) and interpreted (Python) languages.
- A new DevOps specialization has been designed to bridge the gap between IT operations and software development, focusing on containers, Kubernetes, and CI/CD pipelines.
- The Cloud Computing pathway incentivizes specialization in Azure and AWS environments.
- The new Data Science AS degree (GLADS Pathway) provides perfect articulation with local universities like UCR and Cal Poly to address the massive regional deficit in data analytics professionals.
- A multidisciplinary Game Development AS degree has been created in partnership with the Art, Music, Theater, and English departments.

Industry Feedback and Needs

- Employers heavily emphasized the need for project management and oral communication soft skills.
- Students need to learn how to write business plans and technical justifications (such as Bills of Material) to effectively pitch ideas to non-technical board members.
- Industry professionals recommended breaking down academic "stovepipes" to give students cross-training in legal compliance, physical penalty risks, and data privacy concerns (such as HIPAA, GDPR, and GLBA).
- There is a critical need to expand ethics training to all IT disciplines, focusing on the responsible use of AI and teaching students to maintain critical thinking skills without relying on AI shortcuts.
- Basic professional etiquette—such as maintaining a strong work ethic, showing up on time, and meeting project deadlines—remains a fundamental expectation that students must master.

Bachelor's Program Discussion

- The attendees discussed the need for a bachelor's program, and many of the employers concurred that a bachelor's in cloud and security is highly desirable.

Internships and Apprenticeships

- Alyssa from the Launch Apprenticeship Network presented on building non-traditional tech apprenticeships.
- Apprenticeships differ from internships by being structured, long-term, W2-paid positions directly tied to ongoing college coursework, leading to career credentials.
- The department is seeking employer partners to take on 3 to 5 vetted apprentices per year.

Visioning: The "Two-Story Tech Center"

- Employers brainstormed ideas for an ideal tech training facility.
- Suggestions included an inventory and asset management center, public speaking spaces, advanced composites, a messy MakerSpace room, a multipurpose innovation room for startups to cross-pollinate, a threatmap wall, and a helpdesk simulation center.

Student Presentations

- **Cyber Security Club:** Showcased their community outreach efforts with the Boy Scouts, a live traffic light hack demonstration using a Raspberry Pi, and a honeypot setup designed to trap and track attackers.
- **AI Club:** Outlined their mission to transition students from "AI users" to "AI builders," showcased handwriting recognition models, and highlighted their focus on the ethical implementation of AI tools.
- **Game Dev Club:** Discussed their success with hosting game jams and their focus on bridging the gap between technical programming and creative assets to help students build portfolio-ready work.
- **MakerSpace:** Demonstrated hands-on hardware skills, presenting custom printed circuit boards and a battery-powered remote-controlled car built from scratch.
- **Capstone (Cyber 4):** Students detailed their infrastructure project, which involves

physically racking servers, setting up virtual local area networks (VLANs), configuring Fortinet firewalls, and ultimately conducting vulnerability scans and penetration testing against other student teams.